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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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**TITLE:**

**A FAILING MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN: SALVATION IS POSSIBLE**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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## Executive Summary

**Title:** A failing mission in Afghanistan: salvation is possible

**Author:** Major Patrick Robichaud, Marine Corps University

**Thesis:** Waging a campaign with successive phases as in a conventional war is not the approach that can win in Afghanistan. Rather, a more comprehensive course of action is needed that operates on simultaneous multiple lines of operations and addresses security, governance, development and, reconstruction will set the conditions for success, and serve as a model for future similar theatres.

**Discussion:** The intervention in Afghanistan was a punitive strike in response to the attacks on American soil on 9/11. The intent was to prevent further strikes and attack both the Taliban regime and the Al Qaeda terrorists that enjoyed safe havens in Afghanistan. The rapid intervention prevented detailed assessments of the situation and resulted on hasty planning.

The rapid fall of the Taliban coupled with limited and shifting political objectives put the mission in a precarious situation. Early successes were followed by a force build-up and a plan to conduct more conventional warfare operations to eliminate the fleeting Taliban. As assets were split to address the subsequent conflict in Iraq, Afghanistan was no longer the focus or main effort and the Taliban utilized the opportunity to revitalize the insurgency.

Victims of their early success, coalition troops did not realize that the cities were not the main challenge. Later, as they shifted to the rural areas but with insufficient forces, their efforts stalled and the insurgency gained momentum. The US and her allies needed to reassess the intervention, the new goals, the approach, and the force structure. Using some of David Kilcullen's 28 Articles of Counterinsurgency, recommendations for changes in policy guidance, military strategy, socio-economic strategy, and strategic communications, are proposed to enable mission success.

Although Kilcullen's tenets are all noteworthy and useful in a counterinsurgency effort, the following will be utilized in this paper: keep your extraction plan secret, know your turf, diagnose the problem, build trusted networks, maintain presence, practice deterrent patrolling, remember the global audience, and practice armed civil affairs.

**Conclusion:** Many successful counterinsurgencies of the past are useful to compare, contrast, and possibly validate some suggested changes and to measure potential success in Afghanistan and subsequent counterinsurgency-type interventions. Based upon the current situation and recommended adjustments to the forces in theatre, success is within reach. It is a matter of unity of effort, a change in tactics focussing on the people, and communicating the right message to those supporting back home.

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## *Preface*

First, I want to thank the Marine Corps and its University for receiving students from various services, other agencies and, international students, which gave me this opportunity. When I found out I would come to the United States and work with Marines, I looked forward to discovering their world and learn with them. I also realized I would have an opportunity to focus on my professional development and tackle certain issues that have preoccupied me for some time. I chose the counterinsurgency (COIN) in Afghanistan as my thesis subject even though much has been written on COIN. The foundation of this paper rests on my experiences as a company commander in Afghanistan from 2007-2008.

My experience in preparation to deploy and the mission itself changed my approach to the fight. I departed Canada with my 185 man company but quickly realized that we collectively would be challenged on many fronts. We were deployed in a Taliban “fiefdom” and were dispersed to a Forward Operating Base (FOB), a patrol base, and four outposts. I inherited valuable assets from the chain of command: engineers, artillery, tanks, reconnaissance elements, medics, communications specialists, logistical elements, interpreters, and other supporting personnel. Other forces also were permanent fixtures in whatever we did: Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP), their mentoring teams, combat intelligence, Civil and Military Cooperation teams. In addition, there were other temporary attachments that also assisted us. In all, 350-600 people were linked and we shared hardships together. The situation brought me closer to several Afghans whom I had the privilege to know and befriend. It became obvious that we shared a mutual enemy and that 30 years of unrest weighed heavily on them.

Thus, this paper obviously reflects observations or discussions I had the opportunity to experience in Afghanistan, but it is not written to be my story there. I preferred to utilize keystone documents to demonstrate how the mission in Afghanistan is a worthwhile endeavor. This mission needs full attention if coalition elements are to succeed in restoring stability in that war-torn country. Appropriate sources are cited and I have had to limit myself to materials published before early spring 2010 as the mission is ongoing and new documents, approaches, policies, etc. continue to evolve. The main authors which I use are Seth Jones, David Kilcullen and, Daniel Marston even though the classics such as David Galula are just as relevant today. My reasoning was that with the release of the Counterinsurgency Manual (FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5) by the US Army and Marines in 2006, I thought it would be more refreshing and educational to also use more contemporary theorists and assessments.

Second, I must thank those that made this project a reality. First, my project director, Dr. Robert Bruce, without whom I would probably still be writing numerous pages covering various angles of the subject. Although I surprised him late in the process, he gave me a chance and guided my efforts to deliver a coherent document. I would also like to thank Dr. Bradford Wineman for his guidance and patience with my writing; I still am trying to figure out when it is adequate to use passive voice. I am thankful to LtCols Michael Carter and Michael Palermo, both on staff at the Command and Staff College, for taking their time to review my work and provide valuable recommendations. I thank the staff at the Marine Corps Gray Research Center for all their help and for teaching me the tricks of how to maximize all the resources available.

Third, I would like to acknowledge LtCol Sean O'Doherty and Dr. Donald Bittner, my Conference Group Faculty Advisors for their support and advice. To my classmates with whom we shared numerous conversations exchanging ideas, thanks for tolerating all my questions.



Enfin, j'aimerais remercier ma tendre épouse sans qui je n'aurais jamais terminé ce projet. Ta patience envers moi même lorsque je me suis désisté de certaines tâches et tes encouragements lorsque j'ai songé arrêter n'ont pas de prix, merci, merci, merci. Merci aussi à mes enfants d'avoir accepté de sacrifier des heures de jeu pour me laisser lire et écrire des semaines durant, vous êtes des amours.

### **A failing mission in Afghanistan: salvation is possible**

An insurgency supported by the people is the most likely form of fight that an inferior force can wage with the hope of defeating a superior military force such as the United States or a coalition like the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The classic theorist, Carl von Clausewitz, addressed the complex issues associated with people in arms operations for the invading force.<sup>1</sup> Hence, fighting a counterinsurgency cannot solely aim at the defeat of the enemy on a conventional battlefield but must concentrate on his will to fight and, most importantly, the will of the people. As a 21<sup>st</sup> Century contemporary, Major General Sir Rupert Smith warns his readers to resist the appeal of using conventional forces in formations such as battalion-sized battle groups or brigade combat teams and massive fire power when fighting amongst the people.<sup>2</sup> The ultimate prize then is not to defeat the enemy physically but to win the people amongst whom the enemy operates, rendering him irrelevant. With current conflicts being waged by coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, considering past experiences of successful and unsuccessful counterinsurgencies to find solutions is important to prevent repeating mistakes. Specifically, it is necessary to assess the current framework used in Afghanistan to determine if what has occurred and will occur there can succeed as it will certainly influence future commitments.

The intervention in Afghanistan was retaliation for the attacks on American soil on 9/11 by Al Qaeda terrorists whom had safe havens and were harboured by the Taliban regime. With this in mind, it is clear why the attacks focused on that enemy at the beginning of the campaign. Of the four elements of DIME (Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic) used to project national power, the use of the military produces the most immediate effect. But for that effect to be long-lasting, it also requires the use of sound governance, the promotion of economic

development, and the addressing of social issues. When the mission in Afghanistan changed to a counterinsurgency by August 2002, the objective should have changed from defeating the enemy to winning over the people. Unfortunately, with most of the Taliban and/or Al Qaeda strong positions destroyed, the focus changed to establishing a new Afghan government in Kabul while American main effort operations shifted to Iraq. This shift in focus created an opportunity for the insurgents to rebuild between mid-2002 and 2006. During this period, coalition forces focused on killing the enemy rather than winning over the people.

Waging a campaign with successive phases as in a conventional war is not the approach that can win in a war that has evolved in an “insurgency” in Afghanistan. Rather, a more comprehensive course of action that operates simultaneously on multiple lines of operations in a given area, such as an oil spot or concentric circles, must concurrently address security, governance, development and, reconstruction in order to set the conditions for success. This “oil spot” approach has the advantage of combining multiple lines of operations in a specific area before spreading to another area; it can also serve as a model for future similar conflicts. Viewed as a counterinsurgency expert, General Stanley McChrystal was hand-picked to promote unity of effort through the coordination of civil and military actions in Afghanistan.<sup>3</sup> While the campaign design resembled the suggested approach in that it aimed to move from one Regional Command (RC) to the next, the execution within each RC was done by phase rather than a “multiple lines of operations” approach. RC commanders worked independently in their area of operations until mid-2009 when the newly appointed Commander ISAF (COMISAF) identified the need for unity of effort. While General McChrystal is heading in the right direction, there is a lot of work ahead before his efforts can be qualified as a theatre success. Many contributing nations still need to endorse or pursue unity of effort.

Even before delving into this subject, the first step must be to look at the historical and political context leading up to this conflict. After the attacks by Al Qaeda on the United States, the political landscape changed for the Taliban as they became the targeted enemy of Washington. Their eventual overthrow still affects Afghans today. Indeed, governments, non-state actors, and the peoples involved are as much factors as the social context, religion, or the armed forces involved in these hostilities.

Second, an in-depth look at the military strategy will demonstrate the importance of proposed changes both in the approach to such a conflict and with regards to the employment of resources within the theatre. Dr. David Kilcullen is a contemporary writer and a world leading expert on guerrilla warfare who has served as a Special Advisor the Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. He also served as Senior Counterinsurgency Advisor to General David Petraeus in Iraq, and chief counterterrorism strategist for the U.S. State Department. He is a retired Australian Army officer who wrote several documents on counterinsurgency. By using David Kilcullen's 28 articles of counterinsurgency as a framework, changes in the Afghan mission will surface and, if rectified, will enable a positive outcome.<sup>4</sup> (see appendix A for complete list of articles)

Third, a look at the socio-economic strategy will draw lessons that will influence the outcome and have a lasting effect in Afghanistan if properly implemented. Fourth, strategic communications are a key element for any military mission to succeed in keeping the electorate in country and at home both interested and committed to the cause. The military and senior decision makers have a critical role in identifying the goals, explaining the purpose, and noting results; however, they often fail to deliver as is currently the case with regards to the Afghan mission. Finally, recommendations will be formulated to provide insight on what needs changing

with regards to the mission as a whole to positively influence the outcome of the Afghan conflict. These findings, if implemented would shape the approach to future commitments that may confront coalitions, whether intervening to suppress a tyranny, remove rogue non-state actors, or to help rebuild a failed state.

### **Historical and Political Context**

Afghanistan has never been known for its political stability. Nor is it known for economic strengths or for being a homogeneous cultural nation. From Alexander the Great and Genghis Khan's incursions, to the British Empire colonial era wars and the Soviet Union occupation, Afghanistan has been a battlefield and a struggle for existence. In the modern era, it was a landlocked country acting as a "cork" between Empires and in the path of trade quest routes. The Afghan-Pakistani border, known as the Durand Line, was designed by the British in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century to act as a buffer zone between the British and Russian empires. Unfortunately, such lines held little significance in the eyes of the people living there. The Pashtuns, who live on both sides of the porous border, saw this as an attempt to disrupt their lives and divide their people.<sup>5</sup>

Afghanistan's history is scarred by conflict except for the period between 1919 and the Soviet invasion in 1979. During this period, Afghans lived in a relative state of harmony as a nation, despite five political coups. The Soviet intervention was a result of the political coups of 1978 (Nur Mohammad Taraki on Daoud Khan) and 1979 (Hafizullah Amin on Taraki). (See appendix B for chronology) Indeed, the Soviets realized they could not have a workable relationship with Amin. He had obtained a graduate degree at Columbia University in New York and was seen as: "... too close to the United States."<sup>6</sup> In late December 1979, Soviets invaded Afghanistan, killed Amin, and established Babrak Karmal as the new president.<sup>7</sup> An insurgent movement developed and united under the Mujahideen to oppose the Soviet-backed government.

The insurgency controlled most of the rural areas and attracted Afghan army soldiers to their cause. Even before the Soviet invasion, President James E. Carter's administration looked for ways to undermine their archrivals and covertly assisted the insurgent movement.<sup>8</sup> Seeing the opportunity of waging a war by proxy, the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) worked with Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) increasingly to assist the defiant Mujahideens by financing, equipping, and training them.<sup>9</sup> When the Soviet troops left in 1989, western interest in the country decreased. Abandoned after nearly a decade of war, Afghanistan's weak political infrastructure quickly collapsed and in 1992 Tajik and Uzbek Mujahideens toppled the Muhammad Najibullah's Pashtun regime that still had ties to Russia.

Throughout the Soviet intervention, both the Afghan government and the insurgents had some support from all the major ethnic groups.<sup>10</sup> However, the latest coup against the Pashtun government created tribal rifts and led to a violent power struggle.<sup>11</sup> Although there are several smaller tribes, the four main ethnic groups are: the Pashtun, the Hazara, the Tajik, and the Uzbek. Nationalism is not a strong sentiment as the tribe is the highest order to which the people adhere, believe, and support. This allowed opportunistic groups such as the Taliban to establish themselves within the tribes and gain popular support, especially in the South along the Afghan-Pakistani border. Moreover, the Pakistani government supported the Taliban in an effort to counterbalance the Northern Alliance and their supporters from India, Pakistan's rival.<sup>12</sup>

When the Taliban took both Kandahar and Kabul in 1996, it further accentuated the tribal discord as they were perceived as a Pashtun political entity.<sup>13</sup> They were not fully supported by the Pashtuns but the Taliban provided them the most reasonable chance to regain power in Kabul. Within 24 hours of taking the capital, the Taliban immediately imposed the ultra-traditional Sharia Law.<sup>14</sup> Tired of fighting and for the sake of stability and security, Afghans

reluctantly accepted this repressive regime. Unchecked, the Taliban leadership accepted a fateful alliance with Al Qaeda and provided safe havens for recruitment and training of the terrorist group. In return, Al Qaeda provided valuable assets and assisted in asserting Taliban control. Their last play in favour of the Taliban in Afghanistan was the assassination on 9 September 2001 of General Ahmed Shah Massoud, the charismatic commander of the Northern Alliance resistance undermining Taliban control.<sup>15</sup> Two days later, Al Qaeda attacks on US soil would have a very different effect on the Taliban regime.<sup>16</sup>

The campaign that began in Afghanistan on 7 October 2001 was not one of humanitarian assistance or annexation. The US intervention was a response to the 9/11 attacks on American soil and very much punitive in nature. The political control of the country needed to be removed both from Al Qaeda and Taliban leadership. The invasion into Afghanistan came shortly after the Taliban refused President George W. Bush's request to turn over Osama Bin Laden and other Al Qaeda leaders.<sup>17</sup> The intent was to strike at the enemy before they could strike again against the United States. According to the US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, the goals of the operation were to force the regime to give up Bin Laden, give the Northern Alliance a military advantage, make life difficult for the terrorists (without any detail of what this actually meant) and, finally though not a priority, provide humanitarian relief.<sup>18</sup> Despite food donations, the last task would be phased in later and it had repercussions on the effervescence of the insurgency.

Operating in a land-locked country, the invading force could not have total control of Afghanistan's borders. Hence the insurgency could rely on neighbouring countries for foreign support. Consequently, in order to invade Afghanistan, the US needed to find a neighbouring country willing to grant them access in-land. Some of these countries harbour insurgents or their resupply bases that ultimately make their way into the fight in Afghanistan while other bordering

states are also challenged by an insurgent threat in their own country. Many of these neighbours have issues or interests with the drug and weapons trade, while others have political motives for not becoming involved and helping isolate the insurgency. These diverging political agendas make the conflict that much more complex, a challenge that is left to the political elite to reconcile with in support of the mission.

Fortunately, US negotiations with Pakistan resulted in a collaborative relationship in the war effort, especially to remove the Al Qaeda threat.<sup>19</sup> Pakistan would provide the staging area required for the intervention although there were some restrictions on what could be done from within that country. As early as 26 September 2001, a mixed team of CIA operatives and SOF “A-teams” were cleared to move into Afghanistan to rally Afghan resistance fighters. Eleven days later, they would facilitate the overthrow of the Taliban government while under the cover of Allied airpower.<sup>20</sup> These special teams were used as they were originally intended as they coordinated with Afghan tribes that wanted to oust the Taliban, thus effectively help them accomplish a regime change.<sup>21</sup> These teams quickly gained momentum and one such tribal collaborator was Hamid Karzai, now President of the country.

David Kilcullen’s first tenet of counterinsurgency prescribes to “know your turf” before starting operations and emphasizes the importance for commanders to know “... the people, the topography, economy, history, religion, and culture.”<sup>22</sup> The need for a rapid intervention in Afghanistan did not allow for a complete assessment of the tribal networks and time to acquire situational awareness on potential effects of the selection of certain local forces within the alliance. This lack of understanding of the local knowledge and disregard of the first counterinsurgency principle would soon play into the Taliban hands. While they succeeded in disorganizing the terrorists and overthrowing the Taliban government, the US forces failed to



conceive what would happen if Al Qaeda moved out of Afghanistan and sought refuge in bordering countries. Indeed, only Pakistan had agreed to pursue the terrorist group's leadership. It was very difficult to determine the completion of strategic objectives without a detailed policy and a clear understanding of the tactical situation. Shortly after the Taliban regime collapsed, another complication arose; US military and political leaders shifted the main effort to Iraq while an insurgency re-immersed in Afghanistan.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, going in theatre to overthrow the Taliban regime while not simultaneously engaging in other lines of operations such as governance and development, coalition forces recreated the Soviet invasion effect and attracted unnecessary enmity from some of the tribes.<sup>24</sup> Kilcullen advises through two other articles to: "exploit a single narrative" and to "practice armed civil affairs."<sup>25</sup> Here he suggests understanding the people and focus on their motivations and work with them to resolve inadequate pre-existing social and political issues. Unfortunately, without clearly orchestrated goals, the result was growing resentment from the population towards the new government and the occupying force. As Major General Smith concludes in his book *The Utility of Force*: "... only by knowing what you want in terms of the political outcome can you decide what it is you want the military to achieve."<sup>26</sup> A better strategy would have maximized the use of tribal structures mentored by Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and placed an "Afghan face" on the conflict while freeing ISAF troops to focus on other lines of operations to convince Afghans of the positive effects of the intervention. Afghans were more than willing to remove the Taliban; they mostly needed some funding, weapons, munitions, and air cover. As the coalition forces built up, they focused on fighting rather than on governance, development, and reconstruction, to the detriment of the Afghan forces' credibility. This lack of consideration discredited the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and frustrated many

Afghans that had little time for Al Qaeda or the Taliban but increasingly saw ISAF as a common enemy.<sup>27</sup>

The allegations of corruption on the part of the new Afghan government and ANSF compounded the perception of questionable governance while the drastic Taliban justice system at least was seen as harsh but fair.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, some of these claims proved true, specifically during the election campaigns where numerous ballot boxes were tampered with. Also, President Karzai's brother, Ahmed Wali Karzai, has been linked to the drug trade in Kandahar province and is known for appointing friends rather than the right candidates in positions of influence.<sup>29</sup> The solution is not to blindly remove the Karzai government, but to provide advice and governance mentorship to bring transparency and credibility to the representative political body. Otherwise, not mentoring local authorities and allowing questionable nominations undermines legitimacy and plays in favour of the Taliban who then exploit tribal dynamics to draw Afghans away from the central government.<sup>30</sup>

The next articles from Kilcullen provide the foundation for a sound relationship with Afghans. "Knowing your turf" was discussed earlier and is important because a sound understanding of the people, their history, and their culture will provide the tools for building rapport and close relationships. Also important and directly linked to the first article is to "diagnose the problem"; once a commander knows and understands the people, he can better focus on what issues are important to them and why and how insurgents obtain their support.<sup>31</sup> Then, Kilcullen advises to "build trusted networks" and this can only be done by "being present."<sup>32</sup> These two articles are often referred to "hearts and minds," and sometimes pejoratively in military circles, but herein lies the backbone of a successful counterinsurgency. The idea is that by being present, the counterinsurgent force will eventually convince the

Afghans that they are better served working with ISAF and ANSF and that resistance will lead nowhere. A sound approach to bringing credibility to the government officials is by involving the tribes in governance so that they can validate what the government does for their tribes; this is better than being “told” by ISAF personnel that their government is good. Major Jim Gant alludes to the importance of tribal participation in his monogram: One tribe at a time.<sup>33</sup> Both PRTs and the field force play a critical role in connecting with the Afghans by positioning themselves for constant mentorship. One builds trust from the ground up; enables people to participate at tribal councils, and involves tribal leaders in provincial matters that produce tangible results. After this, then they will support a national government.

The new COMISAF’s direction from August 2009 demanded changes from his forces to focus on these principles. Also, this will force his subordinates to operate on multiple lines of operations as suggested earlier. This approach is obviously more time consuming and exposes more troops to danger in the early stages but will likely enhance security as the Afghans see ISAF and ANSF commitments in their area. Time will tell if the various troop-contributing nations will carry on with a “people centric” policy that requires taking more risk but may contribute to overall security and success of the mission.

### **Military Strategy**

Military commanders must evaluate their mission and determine if they need to make changes to their campaign plan and doing so is nothing new.<sup>34</sup> Kilcullen advises counterinsurgency commanders to “keep your extraction plan secret” in order to keep the insurgents guessing what the counterinsurgency forces’ intentions.<sup>35</sup> Once in theatre, General Stanley McChrystal readjusted his forces’ methods and issued a new guidance as the existing counterinsurgency efforts were not succeeding. After a few years of neglect, the Afghan mission

needed clarity and unwavering policy from the political leaders. President Barack Obama provided such guidance as to what is expected but has also potentially hindered success by publicly announcing a time limit on the process and a potential troop drawdown after the deadline of 2011. Past experiences show that the average counterinsurgency requires 14 years to quell and giving General McChrystal an 18 month deadline to produce significant results before downsizing the force may be counterproductive.<sup>36</sup>

As well, troop ratios are too small for the ISAF to be successful. The US Army's FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency manual states that a generic force ratio is 20 to 25 soldiers for every 1,000 habitants, or 2 % to 2.5%.<sup>37</sup> Based on this model, Afghanistan with a population of approximately 25 million people, the security force requires a minimum of 500,000 to 625,000 troops. This number could include both external forces but also the ANSF, provided they are trained, equipped, and ready to contribute to the mission. By end of 2010, the ANSF will have approximately 220,000 troops including the ill-trained (currently only receiving six weeks of training) and often discredited Afghan National Police (ANP). The ANSF are evolving but still are not credible to Afghans. While General McChrystal estimates correctly the need for a growth of the ANA from 135,000 to 240,000 and the ANP from 84,000 to 160,000 before 2011, it is obvious that someone needs to train these troops.<sup>38</sup> This would take nearly all of ISAF forces full-time commitment to meet the deadline, leaving no forces to secure the country. Even once trained, the 400,000 ANSF would still require ISAF's assistance to provide security beyond 2011 until the conflict is over so any expectation that ISAF could reduce their numbers is wishful thinking. To deliver these numbers on such a short timeline is not reasonable.

In keeping with the model above, even counting all of these troops and police officers as part of the solution in 2011, ISAF forces required anywhere from 200,000 to 300,000 troops of

their own for the past few years to obtain the counterinsurgency force ratio level previously stated. With President Barrack Obama's announcement of a surge of 30,000 troops, this will put ISAF close to 115,000 troops.<sup>39</sup> This does not include Operation Enduring Freedom troops which have a counter-terrorist mission and are not included in ISAF troop levels. (see appendix C & D for ISAF troop-contributing nations and force disposition) It is far short of the minimum required to be effective. What this major recruiting drive will provoke is a mass influx of barely-trained fighting age males in uniform left to fend for themselves in remote areas. Another alternative is to make use of auxiliaries from different tribes to help secure the country. These solutions will exponentially increase the chances of corruption and distrust of the tribes towards the central government if the new recruits are not closely supervised by ISAF mentors and trainers. For many contributing nations, the mission in Afghanistan is considered a remote endeavor and getting support for it is difficult. Indeed, even though Afghanistan will require support for another 10 to 20 years, some countries like "... Netherlands and Canada have announced their withdrawal in 2010 and 2011, respectively."<sup>40</sup> Still, political leaders, the media, and the public of different troop-contributing nations ponder why the military cannot effectively overcome the insurgency.

Kilcullen's recommendations captured in the US Army Counterinsurgency Manual referring to "maintain presence" and "keep the initiative" imply that counterinsurgency forces stay in contact with the local population and deter the insurgents by forcing them to react to coalition troops' actions.<sup>41</sup> However, certain force commanders prefer to operate from remote Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) and conduct operations that are intelligence driven, which is contrary to the articles above. Most of the intelligence used by commanders to launch operations from FOBs comes from unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) or SIGINT networks rather than

human intelligence. The information is then processed at the All Sources Information Cell (ASIC) which turns it into useable intelligence for field units.<sup>42</sup> This analysis requires time and certain access which limits the ability to respond in a timely manner and results in many missed opportunities. To alleviate this limitation, commanders often prefer to utilize an airstrike to take out the “target” however, this tactic has the danger to destroy civilian infrastructure and potential for civilian casualties is unacceptable to Afghans and to some coalition leadership.<sup>43</sup> The effect of these strikes is worse if ISAF troops forgo the conduct of a battle damage assessment (BDA) because if they do not investigate and are not present, they provide an opportunity for the insurgents to exploit the bombing incident in their favour.<sup>44</sup>

Relying on air strikes alone also effectively isolates the forces from the population they are supposed to protect. In Kandahar province, for example, where the insurgency was strongest as of 2008, ISAF troops are concentrated in five or six large FOBs and have very little daily interactions with the locals. Some local commanders will allow some interaction such as medical personnel to assist locals but this is not a theatre policy nor is it a directive at the RC level. Like in most other areas of the Afghan theatre of operations, forces moving out of large bases typically move with considerable amounts of fire power and at a great rate of speed, thus alienating everything and everyone in its path. Convoy directives mandate that a logistics convoy must be escorted by a fighting force and that its role is to clear the path for the convoy by use of the necessary force to prevent any breach of the column. One effect is that the population becomes more supportive of the insurgency and the fighters have better freedom of movement to set up and effectively launch ambushes and use Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) against ISAF and ANSF convoys.<sup>45</sup> This will be an important consideration for US Marines as they shift from Helmand to Kandahar province since they will encounter more densely populated centers.<sup>46</sup>

COMISAF's initial assessment document underlines an urgent need for an operational culture change and to redress the lack of unity of effort across the theatre of operations.<sup>47</sup> In his assessment, General McChrystal indicates that the focus must shift from a "defeat the enemy" to a "connect with the people" approach in order to assist in governance and enable ISAF to succeed. Kilcullen suggests that for this to happen, commanders must "train and trust the squad leaders" since connecting with the people is done at the lowest levels.<sup>48</sup> The US Army's FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency Manual also mentions that a counterinsurgency is a struggle for the population's support and that decentralization to the lowest level is necessary. It highlights the notions of the strategic corporal, meaning that everything soldiers do is important towards achieving success.<sup>49</sup> These principles are not new to the American military experience abroad.<sup>50</sup> Mao Tse-tung speaks of the importance of maintaining positive relations with the local population and accepting soldiers that defected from the opposing camp and caring for the wounded.<sup>51</sup> Some contingents like the US Marines, the British and, the Canadians, living closer to the local population actually have had local successes, but these have not been exploited or reproduced elsewhere to build momentum within a Regional Command, much less theatre-wide.

Early in the campaign, US Marines worked closely with locals and fought with Afghan forces to successfully overthrow the Taliban regime and free most of the major cities within the first two months of the offensive that started in 2001. Rather than building on success and following Kilcullen's article to "maintain presence" previously discussed, coalition forces shifted to clear rural areas and quickly realized that battalion-size sweeps were less effective than smaller reconnaissance and raiding missions. These small forces would often surprise insurgents and result in capturing more Taliban, but the lack of troops to maintain presence in these areas allowed the Taliban to re-infiltrate.<sup>52</sup>

Elsewhere in the theatre, US SOF and ODA teams, such as that of Major Jim Gant, deployed in other provinces of Afghanistan and operated on an even smaller scale effectively blending in with tribes and achieved considerable success.<sup>53</sup> They collaborated to destroy enemy targets, but also managed to develop strong ties and relationships that led an entire tribe to collaborate and work with coalition forces.<sup>54</sup> They effectively gained the support of a large tribe that wanted the same end state as ISAF forces: remove the Taliban, and provide security and services for the people. Gant's experience provided valuable insight and knowledge about tribal dynamics. Furthermore, his experience captured firsthand critical concerns of Afghans towards a central government; a deep-rooted perception of corruption.

LCol Ian Hunt, 3<sup>rd</sup> Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Battalion Commander in 2006, operated in Southern Afghanistan. He understood the necessity to stay close to the population and build good relationships. He worked with the ANA and ANP whenever they were available, even if he knew they were not always trustworthy. Regardless, they provided valuable and timely information when conducting operations.<sup>55</sup> LCol Hunt dispersed his command into companies, and even platoon-level forces, to stay in various areas and live amongst the locals. When they interacted, they removed some of their protective equipment to better show a face and eyes, essentially humanizing themselves to the locals.<sup>56</sup> He also made every effort to coordinate his actions with those of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) teams to maximize the effects of their actions. By doing so, they demonstrated unity of effort and succeeded by concurrently exploiting multiple lines of operations.

"Deterrence patrolling" in order to keep the enemy guessing and the population secure is another of Kilcullen's articles which ties into some others seen above.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, this article



assures coalition force commanders' constant presence, builds relationships, and maintains the initiative. Upon arriving in the District of Panjwayi in 2007, Charlie Company from Task Force 3<sup>rd</sup> Royal 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, readjusted convoy procedures contrary to Regional Command South policy. Troops were told to slow down, remove face scarves, be visible and friendly, and be responsive to the population and stop and interact with the locals. They quickly went from being stoned and ambushed to interacting and gaining information on potential IED locations. This sub-unit conducted an aggressive foot patrol plan throughout the AO and gave a sense of security for the population and the local leadership responded by collaborating with ISAF and ANSF alike. Several villagers returned to their villages after they had left the area during offensive actions more than a year earlier. The abandoned Shura was re-established and members actively sought projects, demonstrating the resolve of local leadership to look after the surrounding villages.

These previous examples demonstrate that coalition forces achieved tactical successes in all areas of the country but the Coalition has not managed to exploit these at the operational level for theatre-wide success. Some of these lessons are not always well received by everyone. Some higher staffs and commanders were not keen in instituting small unit tactics as they are resource - intensive to establish permanent presence and they prevent large scale operations from occurring. Some contingents would rather remain behind the protection of FOBs to prevent casualties while other formations would prefer to wage a conventional fight and bring to bear their full arsenal against any threat.<sup>58</sup> Major General Smith discusses the challenges of differing National Rules Of Engagements (ROEs) and explains the impact of what he calls: "the body bag effect."<sup>59</sup> However, success in a counterinsurgency comes from sound operations executed at the squads and platoons which must maintain contact with the local population. To do so in Afghanistan not

only requires many more troops, it also requires troop-contributing nations to accept a higher level of risk for their soldiers to operate in remote areas in small groups.

General McChrystal also sees the need for a change in command structures and relationships to better include the ANSF and obtain unity of effort and command. This is yet another theme familiar to Americans from the past.<sup>60</sup> Until 2009, unity of effort was difficult to achieve amongst political officials and other agencies. It was barely existent within the military community. Indeed, many countries operated under national caveats that precluded them of certain tasks, none the least fighting or doing so in certain areas of Afghanistan.<sup>61</sup> The insurgency utilized this Allied lack of unity to their advantage. While an insurgency has the population as center of gravity, coalition partners concentrated their efforts on what the public polls back home indicated rather than focusing on Afghans, illustrating the challenges commanders face. While field commanders work towards ISAF mission success, they are also accountable to their public back home for resource management and fulfillment of national caveats which sometimes are contradictory.

COMISAF is quite aware of this and has called for important changes. He wants a culture change that will focus on the people while also recognizing the need for unity of effort within ISAF and better partnership with the ANSF.<sup>62</sup> By ordering his troops to live closer and get involved on a daily basis with the villagers, commanders in theatre will replicate a policy aimed at separating the insurgents from the population.<sup>63</sup> Fortunately, Afghans, like ISAF, also want to remove the Taliban and Al Qaeda. However, ISAF and ANSF will need to convince the local population that they actually can provide security. Clearing an area and then leaving because of a shortage of personnel often creates opportunities for insurgents to exploit the situation in their

favour.<sup>64</sup> To be effective and provide Afghans the time to take ownership of their country, ISAF and ANSF need to clear, hold, and build. However, to do so requires more troops.<sup>65</sup>

### **Socio-Economic Strategy**

Unfortunately, going into Afghanistan and looking after the welfare of the people was not a concurrent line of operation. Rather, it was imbedded as a follow on sequential phase to the kinetic phase of the operation. When General McChrystal took command of the ISAF in Afghanistan on 15 June 2009 nearly eight years after US forces entered the country, he began by doing a commander's assessment and established what was required to succeed. This assessment identified the required theatre-wide changes so that ISAF troops work better with both the ANSF and local leadership and give the host nation officials credibility amongst Afghans.<sup>66</sup> He identified the need to create unity of effort not only within ISAF but also with other agencies. Particularly, he mentions that: "ISAF cannot succeed without a corresponding cadre of civilian experts to support the change in strategy and capitalize on the expansion and acceleration of counterinsurgency efforts."<sup>67</sup> In the same assessment, he identifies the need for the military forces to fulfill some of the functions that civilian counterparts cannot readily provide personnel for. He is not alone in this view; policy makers agreed that the military alone could not do everything. Some reiterated that rebuilding a country, while the forces can contribute and provide support in the process, remains primarily a civilian function. Civilian senior officials agree that the solution to nation-building is through a whole of government approach.<sup>68</sup> While this is not a new concept, the challenge for any Coalition partner, of course, is to actually get any significant number of personnel from the other governmental and non-governmental agencies to go into theatre and work towards a common aim.

Until 2006 and because of the main effort still in Iraq, very few other departments could put much effort in coordinating or participating in reconstruction in Afghanistan. Since, the situation has improved but there are some critical shortages and this is why General McChrystal insisted in his initial assessment on the need for the military to provide personnel for these functions, mainly through PRTs. The difficulty stems from the tendency to let the military defeat the opponents and then leave to others the responsibility to rebuild. While a sequential approach may be necessary for a conventional war, fighting an insurgency requires concurrent activities in security, governance, economic development and, rebuilding.<sup>69</sup> This was a change that General McChrystal indicated as necessary to his RC leadership when he assumed command in 2009. This also means that there may be setbacks in the security effort. This is normal as the insurgents are working to discredit both the host nation government and the foreign forces. The process requires a combined, joint, and concurrent effort if the counterinsurgency is to succeed. Indeed, Afghans need to feel safe but they need to identify exactly what is the purpose of the intervention. As mentioned earlier, clearing and then leaving confuses locals as to the intentions of ISAF. They need to see what the coalition and Afghan government can offer compared to what the insurgents provided before the intervention; hence the requirement for concurrent development and reconstruction projects. According to General McChrystal, there has been some progress but it has been very slow and mostly inadequate in the view of Afghans and the insurgents have exploited the situation to their advantage.<sup>70</sup>

By taking deliberate actions that change the daily lives of local people living in his AO, a commander will leave a distinct favourable mark on the people. To do so, it is important to establish strong working relationships with the local leadership immediately even if his tasks are primarily kinetic in nature. In the absence of security, Shuras or town councils often become

either dissolved by the insurgents or dominated by their own leadership; regardless, thus effectively renders them inefficient. Commanders need to identify local leadership and re-establish a legitimate form of local government representation because the Afghan government is “out-governed” rather than outfought.<sup>71</sup> The focus so far has been in support of the central government. The challenge in working with local or tribal leadership is that Afghan government officials perceive the initiative as a threat to their own authority.<sup>72</sup> Leaders must capture the needs of the people, prioritize, and complete projects that will serve two purposes: demonstrate the nature of the intervention and, more importantly, give the Afghans a sense of normalcy to their everyday lives. These can be schools, medical clinics, a District Center, a road, or an irrigation canal. For Afghan farmers, irrigation is the only means to ensure flow of water to their fields, their livelihood. Overlooking a small project can alienate an entire family if not a whole village. For example, Captain Michel Larocque, a CIMIC officer for 3<sup>rd</sup> R22eR Battle Group in 2007, noticed a trend in attacks against vehicles going to their camp in Sperwan Ghar, Panjwayi District from a nearby village. After investigation, he found out that the construction of the route going to his camp had destroyed two small waddis depriving villagers of a source of water. After he had the sources excavated and culverts emplaced, the attacks stopped.<sup>73</sup>

Commerce and exchange of goods are facilitated by serviceable roads and simple paving projects may have a long-lasting positive effect on an entire community or even a whole district. The officer responsible for Panjwayi District observed the positive effects of such a project. Route FOSTER, traversing east-west in this district, was the only line of communication to Kandahar and the most dangerous dirt road in 2007-2008; locals also constantly asked for it to be paved. They explained a paved road would allow for safe movement of goods from far villages into Kandahar city for commerce. Further, a paved road would prevent the dust contamination of

crops raised by ISAF and ANSF vehicles and provide protection from IEDs to all users.<sup>74</sup> This demonstrates the need to exploit several lines of operations while fighting an insurgency.

The importance of this type of project is paramount to demonstrate how much coalition forces care for the Afghans and an example of the Kilcullen's articles to "build your own solution" and "fighting the enemy's strategy."<sup>75</sup> It also builds trust and strong relationships with the locals as the project called for the employment of 300-400 fighting-aged males under the control of local entrepreneurs and it would attract potential fighters away from the Taliban. Reintegration of fighters that have agreed to cease fighting is a difficult yet integral part of reconciliation. When the project started, elders in the villages were ecstatic. Afghans were in charge of the contract, employees, and security, yet no incidents occurred. Unfortunately, the project was abandoned seven months later because the new rotation of military leadership thought it was a wasted effort as it did not progress much for the time it was underway. Unlike the US road project in Kunar, where the military leadership understood its impact for the area, the new commanders in Panjwayi did not grasp the importance of such project for the population.<sup>76</sup> The return of hundreds of unemployed fighting-aged males resulted in an increase in hostilities towards coalition forces. A lack of strategic vision and unity of effort from the ISAF leadership disappointed the Afghans and gave the insurgents another opportunity to exploit. (see appendix E - Afghans working the Panjwayi road project taken in the Spring of 2008)

A successful COIN strategy should not aim for military destruction of the enemy but rather try to minimize the use of force and focus on breaking the enemy's will to fight.<sup>77</sup> General McChrystal identified the need to shift ISAF's strategy from the enemy to the people as one of the: "... two major changes required to improve execution of COIN."<sup>78</sup> To do so, the counterinsurgent must understand the cultural aspects of the local population if he wants to

exploit certain differences amongst the people. Religion and education play a key role in culture and influences the perception of a foreign intervention. Therefore, in a country like Afghanistan where one finds both a strong religious influence and widespread illiteracy, actions communicate. Every action taken is scrutinized and interpreted differently. A simple gesture of looking over a compound wall could have the dire ramification of perpetuating the insurgency.<sup>79</sup> Hence, ISAF personnel need to understand these cultural differences in order to prevent setbacks. It is important to exploit simultaneous lines of operations and provide for development and education because it will reduce illiteracy but this should be done in accordance with local leadership. It may lead some individuals or groups to protest against political decisions or even riot but at least it will enable Afghans to make informed decisions based on acquired knowledge. In the meantime, ISAF and ANSF troops' actions will influence their choices.

The insurgents' center of gravity is the Afghan people but they have a critical vulnerability that has not been seriously attacked. Their sustainment capability for food is nearly limitless with *melmastia*, a tenet of the Pashtunwali code: the people are bound to provide hospitality when asked. Hence the importance of coalition forces to focus on maintaining presence and knowing their turf. Insurgents are far less likely to walk into a village, where security forces are present and active with the community, and demand hospitality. This would also prevent the illicit taxing of locals which would undermine some of their funding.

The more prevalent source of funding for weapons is the drug trade, yet there has not been a theatre-wide eradication campaign. Hundreds of tons of marijuana and opium are grown yearly in Afghanistan and represent millions, if not billions, of dollars. Without this money, insurgents would lose substantial capability to purchase weapons and explosives, as well as the ability to bribe officials.<sup>80</sup> It seems relevant that ISAF should make drug eradication a priority

since it would represent a significant loss of income for the insurgents. Yet, troops cannot focus on drug eradication unless coordinated through local authorities who are at best reluctant to endorse it. Surprisingly, General McChrystal even dismisses drug eradication as not being sufficient to negate the insurgents funding.<sup>81</sup> Perhaps his mandate to support the Karzai government, in spite of its purported ties to drug trafficking, brings a complexity to the situation beyond COMISAF's purview. Drug eradication remains a very complex issue and destroying such cash crops without a sound alternative crop strategy would only attract more enmity.<sup>82</sup>

### **Strategic Communications**

Passage of information and communications with national government decision makers is easier than ever with the technology available today. Instant communications link headquarters all the way down to the squad leader and allow them to interject as the situation develops. This should not matter if proper training was given prior to deployment and that leaders make good use of mission command. Regardless, today's technology provides commanders with an opportunity to see and discuss matters with subordinates on real time events even when separated by several miles. This facilitates coordination of efforts and provides better linkage towards mission accomplishment. However, commanders constantly miss valuable opportunities to demonstrate the good work done daily in Afghanistan. Rather than allow media personnel to cover a story, they are often kept near headquarters for positive control or operational security (OPSEC) reasons. A press conference will often cover a large operation instead of actually attaching press crews to follow soldiers executing their routine interactions with the local population. The final result is that most of the coverage from the mission relates to its cost and any losses. The reality is that the media is present almost everywhere and it can broadcast live to all parts of the world from nearly anywhere. With such a capability, senior decision makers and



military leaders should focus on providing accurate success stories for the media to choose from rather than attempt to control their output.

Kilcullen's articles include remembering the global audience and to use the media as part of the team to get the right narrative out.<sup>83</sup> Despite all these capabilities readily available, leaders at all levels often are outwitted by the insurgents in the use of media. The approach coalition forces should take should resemble that of the insurgents and should benefit from the technological advantages in order to shape the message through it. This drastically changes how operations are conducted in the field putting pressure on commanders not only to do the right thing (i.e. why he is there for in the first place), but also trying to make the actions on the screen speak for themselves without having the privilege of narrating the footage. This challenge is even greater through the lenses of cultural differences as viewers at home will try to make sense of the images but so will citizens of the country in which a force operates and who have a different perspective of the situation. The use of Shuras will alleviate some of the confusion that may persist, so long as the bonds between ISAF and local leadership are well established.

In a counterinsurgency, the center of gravity is the population and engaging in such a conflict without understanding the people such as what was done in 2002 by the coalition is to tempt fate from the start. Mao Tse-tung said that: "... the people are the sea in which the insurgent fish swims and draws strength and that it is the undisciplined soldiers that turn the population against them."<sup>84</sup> By staying out in small garrisons amongst the locals, ISAF troops could learn how to communicate with Afghans. With the predisposition of coalition forces to live in large FOB's, language barriers remain a challenge in Afghanistan where some troops do not even know what language is spoken in their AO, let alone how to speak it. Despite some minor efforts to include language training in military school curriculums like the Marine Corps

Command and Staff College, the skills in language and cultural awareness that could be an enabler in theatre, still are insufficient. Both the presidential policy and COMISAF's training guidance have identified this shortage and prescribe a cultural change in approaching the conflict.<sup>85</sup> The language barrier can initially be mitigated by making use of local forces as human intelligence collectors when interacting with local tribes but coalition forces would be better served by undergoing intensive language training.

The integration of the ANSF and living closer to the population makes it more difficult for the insurgents to deliver their message. LCol Hunt recognized their role and while information sharing was sensitive, he preferred to include ANA and ANP as part of the plan because of their ability to communicate once in contact with the population.<sup>86</sup> General McChrystal confirms the requirement for a better partnership and integration with the ANSF in daily operations and as their proficiency augments, it will lead to their autonomy.<sup>87</sup> However, there is a reluctance to work with the ANA and share information about insurgents and this sentiment worsens when dealing with the ANP. Instead of integrating them, mentoring them, and putting an Afghan face to the operation, the tendency is to execute alone in the name of OPSEC. This goes against capacity building and will ultimately slow down the process of handing over security to the ANSF. Even the FM 3-24 recognizes the importance of sharing information although it recommends caution when doing so.<sup>88</sup> While caution may be valid at times, being overly cautious hinders the perception of the Afghan people towards their government forces. They are still the best asset to engage with Afghans and build the relationships Kilcullen considers most important.<sup>89</sup>

Finally, sending the right message is also important internally within the fighting forces. It is easy to recognize wounded soldiers or those that distinguish themselves in the face of the

enemy. Leaders also need to emphasize those that do not normally fit the traditional awards committee profile; the warrior-diplomats who both distinguish themselves in combat and also establish good relations with tribal councils. Kilcullen makes it one of his articles: “rank is nothing; talent is everything.”<sup>90</sup> He advises to employ the crafty personnel with strong people skills in positions where they can be enablers for success. Those personnel, who set up District Centers, partake in Shuras near or within insurgent strongholds, gain local people’s trust, and flush out insurgents without having to wage the kinetic fight are key enablers and need recognition.<sup>91</sup> Lately, some commanders have addressed this issue by designating promising officers and senior non-commissioned officers to roles within PRTs, OMLTs, PMLTs and, ETTs. It is a step in the right direction but must be endorsed throughout the theatre, for the duration of the intervention and, promoted to all services as coveted positions. After all, Sun Tzu said: “...supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy’s resistance without fighting.”<sup>92</sup> Granted, some fighting will be required, but it is possible that some fights occurred only because leaders and soldiers ignored the cause of the escalation of force.

### **Not Too Late**

COMISAF is correct in stating that the military requires a culture change and needs to focus on unity of effort. Coalition leaders can learn from past experiences and still succeed in Afghanistan, but for an increasing number of senior decision makers of troop-contributing nations, time is running out. Many changes are required from several levels for success to materialize. It is not too late for the on-going mission in Afghanistan, and for future commitments, decision makers need to determine what the objectives are for the near and long term before designing foreign policy and committing the military. They need to define attainable goals, give strategic guidance, and provide the resources in order to enable commanders they

entrust with the mission to succeed. This includes refraining from setting short timelines that are counterproductive to defeating an insurgency and delivering on capability development. Unity of effort starts at the very top.<sup>93</sup> Troop-contributing nations need to accept unity of command and focus on unity of effort in order to achieve success in a counterinsurgency effort. This could include the complex issue of working through common ROEs which sovereign nations may find unacceptable. The financing of the insurgency through drugs must be stopped but initiated at the very top echelons. Without it, commanders in the field are left to face Afghans that do not understand why the government does not get involved. Rather, why ISAF does not stop the Afghan government from profiting from the drug trade? Talks on this topic in early 2010 are encouraging.

Military leaders need to be frank about their capabilities and ensure they can accomplish the mission once they accept it, starting at the top. General McChrystal was appointed as COMISAF because of his credentials with regards to counterinsurgency. Yet, he faces the irreconcilable challenges of not having enough personnel to train ANSF and support them in securing Afghanistan and, is working on a very short timeline. They need to work extremely hard at building relationships with civilian counterparts assigned to the AO and also with the ANSF who ultimately will inherit the AO. Many leaders believe that civilians cannot contribute adequately to the theatre of operations, let alone take charge and direct efforts in rebuilding a war-torn nation. Civilian agencies are better suited to look after governance and development; they need military support and security as they lack manpower and equipment, not competencies. Unity of effort demands that successful tactical initiatives must be widely communicated to provide for potential operational integration and success. Only by doing so can strategic objectives be achieved.

Conventional forces need to adapt to the counterinsurgency ongoing in Afghanistan. Tighter control, constant presence, and personal involvement with local nationals will demonstrate resolve. The “clear then leave” approach to the campaign demonstrates the challenges of restrictions both in time and human resources. Canadians had to abandon cleared terrain after Operation Medusa in 2006 because of ISAF and ANSF resources shortages.<sup>94</sup> Since then, troop levels were increased but, as the Marines in Marja now realize as they wait to transfer control to Afghan leadership and move on to Kandahar, there is still too few capable Afghans to pass on responsibilities.<sup>95</sup> Better focus and selection of key areas to control where the “clear-hold-build” or the “ink spot” allowing multiple lines of operations to run concurrently must be adopted rather than phasing them in.

There is a wide variety of books, articles, and manuals on counterinsurgency. The key point is simple: many lessons are captured but not necessarily learned. Pre-deployment preparations should focus on educating on counterinsurgency methods as much as they focus on kinetic practical exercises. If the ANSF and ISAF are to succeed in Afghanistan or other similar theatres in the near future, commanders will need replace battle group and brigade conventional operations with company, platoon, or even squad-level missions. Contrary to usual practices, this involves young leaders and soldiers to operate independently at the small unit level tactics and be close to the people they are sent to protect. Their individual actions can have operational and strategic consequences. Successful leaders in theatre must be identified and utilized wisely upon their return to train others and advise on how to operate in such complex environment.

The pattern so far has been the bad habit of military forces going in blind and learning lessons all over again instead of starting ahead with the knowledge of past conflicts. Commanders must ensure that everyone has access and study past lessons to get ahead before

going into theatre. Kilcullen's article stating that the military need to practice armed civil affairs is clear; in lieu of civilians imbedded to look after the rebuilding and development components of a counterinsurgency mission, military personnel must be trained or prepared to coordinate such projects should civilians not be available. A unified approach including the "Whole of Government" team to pre-deployment training would resolve some of the relationship struggles prior to the mission and also inform every one of actual capabilities and limitations. Aside from a few designated liaison officer positions within a task force, very few other government agency personnel have the opportunity to train with their military counterparts prior to deployment. Military structures need to be reconsidered; concepts such as Enhanced Company Operations to at least include intelligence capabilities and CIMIC assets, need consideration if it means success in a counterinsurgency. Even at the company level, commanders must be prepared to decentralize and split their organization to platoon and squad levels to work with local officials and host nation forces as they are enablers for mission success.

Military leaders are weak in strategic messaging and selling the mission to their own public. Some feel that the media scrutinizes their actions yet they remain timid or reluctant to demonstrate the positive aspects of the mission. Better use of communications and the media will empower the people back home to understand and endorse the mission. Coverage of success stories with the ANA mentoring, schooling and, jobs created will depict the progress of the mission. While these are the metrics that will demonstrate success and allow eventual withdrawal, leaders allow the media to convey a pessimistic image of the mission through the coverage of incidents such as fallen soldiers or failed attacks. It is a command responsibility to convey the success of the mission. Here are examples that are not exploited enough to positively influence the people and their representatives:

“The successes of development in Afghanistan since 2001 are indisputable: more than 13,000 kilometers of roads have been (re-)built, more than three million people have gained access to drinking water in the countryside alone, and four million people have gained access to electricity. More than six million children have started school, more than a third of them girls (who were banished from education under the Taliban). More than 50,000 people are studying at the 19 universities in the country, while more than 10,000 are learning about engineering and mechanics at professional schools. The national economy has been growing, on average, by double digits each year, per capita income has more than doubled.”<sup>96</sup>

Hence there has been progress in Afghanistan and General McChrystal’s plan is moving towards a positive outcome but must be pursued. He will require either more troops or more time, likely both, to accomplish his mission and provide the troop-contributing nations a positive outlook on Afghanistan. The question now is whether he will obtain these crucial resources from these nations and how long will the public support the effort. The ANSF are developing but are limited in how many new trainees they can deliver. This implies that coalition forces hold longer than they intended and even build while they are replaced by Afghan governance and civilian counterparts.

Sensitive issues such as unity of effort are critical and a command responsibility that starts at the very top. This sets the conditions for a sound campaign plan and ultimately provides direction for every commander in the field. Recent talks in Washington seem to dispel earlier indications of lack of unity between Karl W. Eikenberry, US ambassador to Afghanistan, and General McChrystal.<sup>97</sup> It appears that even the reservations towards President Karzai mentioned in ambassador Eikenberry’s cables dating back November 2009, are now put behind in an effort to build working relationships with Afghan governance.<sup>98</sup> Previous examples provide ample proof that success is achievable at the tactical level; with unity of effort being worked out, General McChrystal’s efforts will lead to mission success.

In closing, while the counterinsurgency effort ongoing in Afghanistan is achievable, it must be pursued. Phasing the different lines of operations is not an effective model. Rather, by integrating them and executing them concurrently, the chances of success will increase significantly. As a minimum, military leaders must have initiative, creativity, judgment, and dedication to be successful. Otherwise, this theatre could be remembered as a failed intervention despite the excellent work that has been done by coalition forces. This would reflect negatively on the UN, ISAF, or any other coalition's capability to achieve success. Worst, retreating would cast a shadow on coalition members, especially the United States, the superpower that could not exert its military might to subdue a small non-state actor. This would give hope to other belligerents that may contemplate such an opportunity in the future.



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<sup>1</sup> In Chapter 26, book 6, the author warned of the danger an invading force could face against a nation in arms in (over-extended lines of communication, attacked at the most vulnerable points, lack of resources to control the entire territory: Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Howard and Peter Paret, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 479-480.

<sup>2</sup> Rupert Smith, *Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 5.

<sup>3</sup> Christopher J. Lamb and Martin Cinnamond, "Unified Effort: Key to Special Operations and Irregular Warfare in Afghanistan," *Joint Force Quarterly* no.56 (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2010), 42.

<sup>4</sup> David Kilcullen, "Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency," *Military Review* (Special Edition, October 2006), 134-139.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel Marston, "Lessons in 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Counterinsurgency: Afghanistan 2001-07," *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, ed. Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian (New York: Osprey Publishing, 2008), 221.

<sup>6</sup> Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan* (New York: W.W Norton & Company, 2009), 16.

<sup>7</sup> Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 20.

<sup>8</sup> Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 21.

<sup>9</sup> Marston, *Lessons in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Counterinsurgency*, 221. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 31.

<sup>10</sup> Marston, *Lessons in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Counterinsurgency*, 221.

<sup>11</sup> Marston, *Lessons in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Counterinsurgency*, 222.

<sup>12</sup> Marston, *Lessons in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Counterinsurgency*, 223.

<sup>13</sup> Marston, *Lessons in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Counterinsurgency*, 222.

<sup>14</sup> Marston, *Lessons in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Counterinsurgency*, 222.

<sup>15</sup> Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 86.

<sup>16</sup> Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 87.

<sup>17</sup> Marston, *Lessons in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Counterinsurgency*, 223.

<sup>18</sup> Marston, *Lessons in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Counterinsurgency*, 224.

<sup>19</sup> Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 88-89.

<sup>20</sup> Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 90.

<sup>21</sup> Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 90.

<sup>22</sup> David Kilcullen, "Twenty-Eight Articles", 134.

<sup>23</sup> Marston, *Lessons in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Counterinsurgency*, 226-227.

<sup>24</sup> John A. Nagl, "A Better War in Afghanistan," *Joint Force Quarterly* no. 56 (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2010): 34-35.

<sup>25</sup> David Kilcullen, "Twenty-Eight Articles", 137-138.

<sup>26</sup> Smith, *Utility of Force*, 375.

<sup>27</sup> Marston, *Lessons in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Counterinsurgency*, 227.

<sup>28</sup> Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla*, 47, 50.

<sup>29</sup> Mark Moyar, *A Question of Command: Counterinsurgency from the Civil War to Iraq* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 204.

<sup>30</sup> Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla*, 51.

<sup>31</sup> Kilcullen, "Twenty-Eight Articles", 134.

<sup>32</sup> Kilcullen, "Twenty-Eight Articles", 136.

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<sup>33</sup> Jim Gant, *Monogram: One Tribe at a Time*. [http://blog.stevenpressfield.com/wp-content/themes/stevenpressfield/one\\_tribe\\_at\\_a\\_time.pdf](http://blog.stevenpressfield.com/wp-content/themes/stevenpressfield/one_tribe_at_a_time.pdf), 25-28.

<sup>34</sup> The American intervention in the Philippines at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century required that Major General Arthur MacArthur, the newly appointed theatre commander, readjust the campaign plan to meet the challenges of his mission. In Brian McAllister Linn, *The Philippine War: 1899-1902* (Lawrence, KS, University Press of Kansas, 2000), 213-214.

<sup>35</sup> David Kilcullen, "Twenty-Eight Articles", 139.

<sup>36</sup> Seth G Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2008), 10.

<sup>37</sup> US Department of the Army, and Headquarters US Marine Corps. *Counterinsurgency*. FM3-24 or MCWP 3-33.5 (Washington, DC: US Department of the Army, Dec 2006), 1-13.

<sup>38</sup> Stanley A. McChrystal, *Commander's Initial Assessment*. Headquarters Commander International Security Assistance Force (Kabul: 30 August 2009), 2-15.

<sup>39</sup> ISAF Afghanistan site, <http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/placemat.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> Ryan Keller, "Arguing Afghanistan : What the detractors of NATO's mission get wrong", *NATO Research Paper*, no. 50 (September 2009) : 7, <http://merln.ndu.edu/index.cfm?secID=102&pageID=3&type=section> (accessed May 11, 2009).

<sup>41</sup> FM3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, Appendix A, A-4.

<sup>42</sup> This procedure was a common operating procedure observed by the author while deployed as a field commander in RC South in 2007-2008. All intel, including any humint, was sent to the ASIC for analysis before it was sent back to field units for targeting, sometimes several days after these same units had provided the intel.

<sup>43</sup> Lamb and Cinnamon, *Unified Effort: Key to Special Operations and Irregular Warfare in Afghanistan*, 44-46.

<sup>44</sup> Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 181.

<sup>45</sup> Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla*, 55.

<sup>46</sup> Julian E. Barnes, "U.S. Calls Marja Offensive A Success", *Los Angeles Times*, May 7, 2010.

<sup>47</sup> McChrystal, *Commander's Initial Assessment*, 1-2, 1-3.

<sup>48</sup> Kilcullen, "Twenty-Eight Articles", 135.

<sup>49</sup> FM3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 1-28.

<sup>50</sup> In the Philippine War from 1899-1902, Brigadier General Samuel B.M. Young in Northwestern Luzon implemented several governance initiatives and because of the loyalty of the locals, he armed local militias. He also introduced certain crops and organized state-sponsored education. See Brian McAllister Linn, *The US Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 34-35.

<sup>51</sup> MaoTse-tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1961), 86-87.

<sup>52</sup> Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 254.

<sup>53</sup> Jim Gant, *Monogram: One Tribe at a Time*. [http://blog.stevenpressfield.com/wp-content/themes/stevenpressfield/one\\_tribe\\_at\\_a\\_time.pdf](http://blog.stevenpressfield.com/wp-content/themes/stevenpressfield/one_tribe_at_a_time.pdf) , 24-28

<sup>54</sup> Jim Gant, *Monogram: One Tribe at a Time*. [http://blog.stevenpressfield.com/wp-content/themes/stevenpressfield/one\\_tribe\\_at\\_a\\_time.pdf](http://blog.stevenpressfield.com/wp-content/themes/stevenpressfield/one_tribe_at_a_time.pdf) , 24-28.

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<sup>55</sup> Ian Hunt, *Dancing with the Dushman: Command Imperatives for the Counter-Insurgency Fight in Afghanistan* (Kinston, ON: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2008), 42-43.

<sup>56</sup> Hunt, *Dancing with the Dushman*, 55, 69.

<sup>57</sup> Kilcullen, "Twenty-Eight Articles", 137.

<sup>58</sup> Robert M. Cassidy, *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror: Military Culture and Irregular Warfare* (Westport, CT, Praeger Security International: 2006), 122.

<sup>59</sup> Smith, *Utility of Force*, 292.

<sup>60</sup> This had also occurred in the Philippines. Brigadier J. Franklin Bell ensured subordinates followed his plan using clear direction distributed through Telegraphic Circulars and General Orders, the most inclusive was G.O. 100. See Robert D. Ramsey III, *A Masterpiece of Counterinsurgency Warfare: BG Franklin Bell in the Philippines, 1901-1902*, OP 25 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2007), 5-14. Also, in Vietnam, Robert W. Komer, a political advisor who implemented the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) pacification efforts, recommended that it be consolidated under the one chain of command. He thought that this would be the only way CORDS would work. See Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam*, (Baltimore, the Johns Hopkins University Press :1986), 217.

<sup>61</sup> The author mentions that : there were those involved in ground combat in the south (US, Canada, United Kingdom and, Netherlands) and all the others were not because of national caveats which directly impacted the unity of effort. See Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 249-250.

<sup>62</sup> McChrystal, *Commander's Initial Assessment*, 1-3.

<sup>63</sup> This is akin to what BGen Bell did in the Luzon provinces a century ago. He had ordered his troops to deploy and live in the villages and created safe zones where the local population were concentrated and considered anyone outside these zones as potential hostiles. See Linn, *The US Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902*, 165. As Well, this was also done in Vietnam with the Marines' Combined Action Platoons. See John A. Nagl, "Counterinsurgency in Vietnam : American Organizational Culture and Learning," *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, eds. Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian (New York: Osprey Publishing, 2008), 140.

<sup>64</sup> Nagl, "A Better War in Afghanistan", 35.

<sup>65</sup> Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 253-254.

<sup>66</sup> Lamb and Cinnamond, "Unified Effort: Key to Special Operations and Irregular Warfare in Afghanistan", 48.

<sup>67</sup> McChrystal, *Commander's Initial Assessment*, 2-21.

<sup>68</sup> Richard G. Lugar, "Stabilization and Reconstruction : A Long Beginning." 4, and Christopher M. Schnaubelt, "Complex Operations and Interagency Operational Art." 37-38 *Prism*, 1, no 1. (Washington DC: 12/2009), 3-8 and 37-49.

<sup>69</sup> Kilcullen, *Accidental Guerrilla*, 60.

<sup>70</sup> McChrystal, *Commander's Initial Assessment*, 2-21.

<sup>71</sup> Kilcullen, *Accidental Guerrilla*, 60.

<sup>72</sup> Governor Gul Agha Shirzai accused US officials of turning tribal elders into "little governors" and meddling in tribal politics. See Joshua Partlow and Greg Jaffe, "U.S. military runs into Afghan tribal politics after deal with Pashtuns," *Washington Post*, May 10, 2010.

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<sup>73</sup> Un-official report dated early September from Captain Larocque, Civil and Military Cooperation officer for Panjwayi District from July 2007-March 2008, to Officer Commanding Charlie Company, 3R22eR Battle Group.

<sup>74</sup> Author's observations while in theatre between 2007-2008.

<sup>75</sup> Kilcullen, "Twenty-Eight Articles", 138.

<sup>76</sup> Kilcullen, *Accidental Guerrilla*, 107-108.

<sup>77</sup> Cassidy, *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror*, 122-123.

<sup>78</sup> McChrystal, *Commander's Initial Assessment*, 2-11.

<sup>79</sup> Marston, *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, 22.

<sup>80</sup> Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 317-319.

<sup>81</sup> McChrystal, *Commander's Initial Assessment*, 2-8.

<sup>82</sup> Sharon Firewicz, an alumni from Command and Staff College from 2008-2009, wrote her MMS on the challenges of drug eradication. See: Sharon, L. Firewicz, "Poppy Eradication in Afghanistan: Why Isn't It Working?" Masters of Military Studies Thesis, Marine Corps University. 2009.

<sup>83</sup> Kilcullen, "Twenty-Eight Articles", 136-137.

<sup>84</sup> Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 93. Further, another American leader identified this important factor while in the Philippines; BGen Funston recognized this over 100 years ago and said: "... in the Philippines, efficiency of a company depends on knowledge of people and the country." See Linn, *The US Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War*, 22.

<sup>85</sup> McChrystal, *ISAF Commanders Counterinsurgency Guidance*, 5. McChrystal, *ISAF Commanders Training Memorandum*, 2-3. McChrystal, *Commander's Initial Assessment*, 2-12. Also, Christopher Lamb and Martin Cinnamond, "Unity of Effort: Key to Success in Afghanistan," *Strategic Forum* no. 248 (October 2009): 1. <http://www.ndu.edu/inss>

<sup>86</sup> Hunt, *Dancing with the Dushman*, 42-43.

<sup>87</sup> McChrystal, *Commander's Initial Assessment*, 2-15.

<sup>88</sup> FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 3-34,35.

<sup>89</sup> Kilcullen, "Twenty-Eight Articles", 134-139.

<sup>90</sup> Kilcullen, "Twenty-Eight Articles", 135.

<sup>91</sup> This is not always the case; in Vietnam, most success stories conducted under the CORDS program were forgotten; worse, officers perceived an advisor role as: "...career ending." Andrew F. Krepinevich Jr., *The Army in Vietnam* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 208-209.

<sup>92</sup> Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*. Ed. with an intro by Dallas Galvin and trans. by Lionel Giles. (New York: Barnes & Nobles Classics, 2003), 15.

<sup>93</sup> Cristopher Lamb and Martin Cinnamond, "Unity of Effort: Key to Success in Afghanistan," 1-4. <http://www.ndu.edu/inss>

<sup>94</sup> Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 254.

<sup>95</sup> Associated Press, "Too Few ready To Take Over In Taliban Strongholds, Senate Panel Is Told," *Washington Post*, May 7, 2010.

<sup>96</sup> Ryan Keller, "Arguing Afghanistan ", 6.

<sup>97</sup> Joshua Partlow, "Bridging the Divides ", *Washington Post*, May 9, 2010.

<sup>98</sup> Command and Staff College Syllabus, "Ambassador Eikenberry's Cables ", *Culture and Interagency Operations Lesson 4408*, AY 2009-10, 158-164. Karen DeYoung, "Karzai arrives for White House visit," *Washington Post*, May 11, 2010.

## Appendix A

### David Kilcullen's 28 Articles<sup>1</sup>

1. Know your turf (people, topography, economy, history, religion, and culture);
2. Diagnose the problem (who are the insurgents, how and why do they get support);
3. Organize for intelligence (finding the enemy is most difficult, while operations are intelligence driven, most intelligence will come from your operations);
4. Organize for interagency operations (learn how to work with civil agencies as their efforts will ultimately win the war);
5. Travel light and harden your combat service support (or the insurgents will constantly out-run and out-manoeuvre you and attack weaker elements);
6. Find a political/cultural advisor (someone with excellent people skills and a feel for the environment);
7. Train the squad leaders – then trust them (counterinsurgency is a junior leader's war and often down at the soldier's level);
8. Rank is nothing; talent is everything (not everyone understands counterinsurgency or can't execute properly, choose wisely);
9. Have a game plan (it must be simple, flexible to account for setbacks and known to everyone);
10. Be there (your presence when incidents occur or capacity to respond immediately are key; live in your sector and move on foot to reduce risk);
11. Avoid knee-jerk responses to first impressions (don't act rashly; get the facts first as initial impressions could be misleading);
12. Prepare for handover from day one (you will not resolve the insurgency on your watch but by capturing lessons learned you can provide your successor valuable knowledge);
13. Build trusted networks (the true meaning of hearts and minds; hearts is to persuade the people their best interests are served by your presence and minds is to convince them you can protect them and resistance is useless);
14. Start easy (start from secure areas and move outwards; go with the grain of local society);
15. Seek early victories (stamp your dominance; resolve a long-standing issue yet to be resolved or co-opt a key local leader who had resisted cooperation before you);

16. Practice deterrent patrolling (keep the enemy off-balance concerning your intentions and reassure the population);
17. Be prepared for setbacks (be flexible enough to move back and forth between phases);
18. Remember the global audience (train your people to communicate their actions and befriend the media);
19. Engage the women, beware of the children (to win the women is to own the family and prevent soldiers from being too friendly with children as they could be used to target you);
20. Take stock regularly (study trends concerning social, informational, military and economic issues instead of body counts to assess your progress);
21. Exploit a single narrative (win the trust of local opinion-makers by learning what motivates them; this is art, not science);
22. Local forces should mirror the enemy not your forces (aim is to supplant the insurgent's role);
23. Practice armed civil affairs (soldiers must be capable of conducting civil affairs as it will ensure security and create a permissive operating environment);
24. Small is beautiful (stay focused on local conditions and needs of your area, keep the projects small, cheap, sustainable, low-key and recoverable if they fail);
25. Fight the enemy's strategy not his forces (by doing so, you will force him to go on the offensive, make mistakes and become vulnerable);
26. Build your own solution – only attack the enemy when he gets in the way (your approach is environment-centric instead of enemy-centric; it allows the enemy a way out);
27. Keep your extraction plan secret (although the locals have an idea, keep them guessing, especially the insurgents so they can't try to exploit the situation with a critical attack); and
28. Whatever you do, keep the initiative (if the enemy is reacting, you control the environment; stay focused on the population rather than the enemy).

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<sup>1</sup> These articles were taken from: David Kilcullen, "Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency" in *Military Review* (Fort Leveanworth, KS: Combined Arms Center, October 2006), 134-139.

## Appendix B

### Timeline of events

**329 BC**

Alexander the Great invades Afghanistan on his way to India

**642**

Arabs invade Afghanistan

**1219**

Genghis Khan invades as part of the Mongol empire

**1504**

Babur invades Afghanistan

**1747**

Ahmad Shah Durrani (a Pashtun unites tribes of modern Afghansitan)

**1839-1842**

First Anglo-Afghan War – Crushing British defeat, 16 000 men reduced to one survivor

**1878-1880**

Second Anglo-Afghan War – Battle of Kandahar seals British victory over Ayub Khan

**1893**

12 Nov – the Durand Line Agreement is signed and establishes a border between Afghanistan and what is today's Pakistan

**1919**

Third Anglo-Afghan War -- leads to the treaty of Rawalpindi recognizing Afghan independence

**1929**

King Amanullah Khan is overthrown by Habibullah Kalakani, a Tajik. He is overthrown by the Pashtun Musahiban family and Muhammad Nadir Shah becomes the leader.

### **1933**

Muhammad Nadir Shah is assassinated and his son Zahir Shah takes over at the age of 19 however his relatives look after the country

### **1963**

Zahir Shah takes over the country and introduces an era of modernity and democratic freedom

### **1973**

With the support of the Afghan army, Daoud Khan overthrows his cousin Zahir Shah

### **1978**

Daoud Khan is assassinated on 27 April and Nur Mohammad Taraki is put in power

### **1979**

Nur Mohammad Taraki is arrested and assassinated by his deputy Hafizullah Amin

Dec 24 – Soviet Airborne troops are in Kabul

Dec 27 – Soviet Special Forces and KGB assault the Palace and kill Amin and install Babrak Karmal as president

### **1980**

01 Jan – Soviets are occupying all major cities including Kandahar

### **1986**

Premier M Gorbachev announces partial withdrawal

Nov – Soviets place Muhammad Najibullah to replace Babrak

### **1989**

15 Feb - Last Soviet troops leave Afghanistan

### **1992**

United States end arms shipments to Afghanistan

For several years tribal infighting continues

### **1994**

Taliban forces take control of Spin Boldak near Quetta on the other side of the Pakistan border



November - Taliban forces capture Kandahar and begin staging to take the entire country

## **1995**

Taliban forces capture Herat in September and move towards Kabul

## **1996**

Mullah Muhammad Omar removes the cloak of the Prophet Muhammad in Kandahar in April and appoints himself the commander of the faithful

September - Kabul falls

## **1998**

August - Taliban conquer Mazar-e-Sharif, United States launches cruise missiles against Al Qaeda training camps in Khowst Province

## **2000**

Taliban capture Taloqan and have control of most of the territory

## **2001**

09 Sept – Commander of the Northern Alliance, Ahmed Shah Massoud, is assassinated by Al Qaeda operatives

11 Sept – Al Qaeda hijack planes for attacks against U.S (World trade Center, Pentagon and Shanksville, Pennsylvania

26 Sept – Gary Schroen CIA agent leads a team on Operation Jawbreaker into Afghanistan

07 Oct – U.S. initiate bombing campaign in Afghanistan

10 Nov - U.S. and Afghan forces capture Mazar-e-Sharif

11 Nov – U.S. and Afghan forces capture Taloqan and Bamiyan

12 Nov – U.S. and Afghan forces capture Herat

13 Nov – U.S. and Afghan forces capture Kabul

14 Nov - U.S. and Afghan forces capture Jalalabad

26 Nov - U.S. and Afghan forces capture Kunduz

05 Dec – Afghan political leaders sign the Bonn Agreement establishing a timeline for the creation of a representative government, Kandahar falls to U.S. and Afghan forces, U.S. shift interests towards Iraq

## **2002**

March – U.S. and coalitions forces launch Operation Anaconda in the Shaw Wali Kot Valley

June – Afghanistan holds a loya jirga and select Hamid Karzai as the head of the transitional government

Aug – Insurgents launch attacks in Kandahar and Khowst provinces marking the beginning of the insurgency against the Afghan government

## **2003**

July - U.S. and Afghan forces launch Operation Warrior Sweep in Paktia Province

Nov - U.S. and Afghan forces launch Operation Mountain Resolve

Dec – Afghanistan holds a loya jirga to discuss new constitution which is approved in January

## **2004**

April - Pakistan reaches Shakai agreement with Taliban to stop skirmishes

June – Pakistani forces launch operation in the Shakai Valley as insurgents are in alarming numbers

July – Médecins sans frontières leave Afghanistan because of deteriorating security

Oct – Presidential elections make Hamid Karzai the president, NATO completes Stage 1 into Northern Afghanistan

## **2005**

Sept – Afghans hold Wolesi jirga (house of the people) and Meshrano jirga (house of elders), NATO completes Stage 2 of its expansion moving westward

## **2006**

March - U.S. and Afghan forces launch Operation Mountain Lion in Kunar Province

May - U.S. and Afghan forces launch Operation Mountain Thrust to quell the Taliban insurgency in the south

July – NATO completes Stage 3 of its expansion moving into southern Afghanistan

Sept – Operation Medusa begins in Kandahar Province against dug-in Taliban forces, involving several NATO countries including Canada and the Netherlands

Oct – NATO completes Stage 4 of its expansion into the east and the country is divided into five geographic commands: RC Central, North, West, South, and East

Nov – At NATO Summit in Riga, tensions surface over military contributions of partners

## **2007**

Jan – British royal Marines begin Operation Volcano, followed by Operation Achilles

July – U.S. release a document stating that Al Qaeda remains biggest Homeland threat and that a safehaven is in Pakistan FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas)

27 Dec – Former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto is killed during the election campaign

## **2008**

27 Apr - Failed attempt on President Karzai's life

10 June – U.S. troops kill 12 Pakistani Frontier Corps soldiers

7 July – Indian Embassy in Kabul is bombed killing more than 50 people which would involve Pakistan's ISI

18 Aug - Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf resigns

22 Aug – U.S. AC-130 gunship kills civilian and President Karzai visits site and condemns Coalition forces

Sept – Bomb explodes outside the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad killing more than 50 people

Nov – Terrorists attack sites in Mumbai, India after which Karzai calls for a regional fight against terrorism

## **2009**

Feb – President Obama announces a 50% increase of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, suicide attack in Kabul kills at least 20 people

27 Mar – President Obama releases U.S. government new strategy for Afghanistan to be population-centric

15 June – General Stanley McChrystal assumes command of ISAF

Note: This timeline was collected from the readings in the Bibliography.



## Appendix C International Security Assistance Force and Afghan National Army strength & Laydown



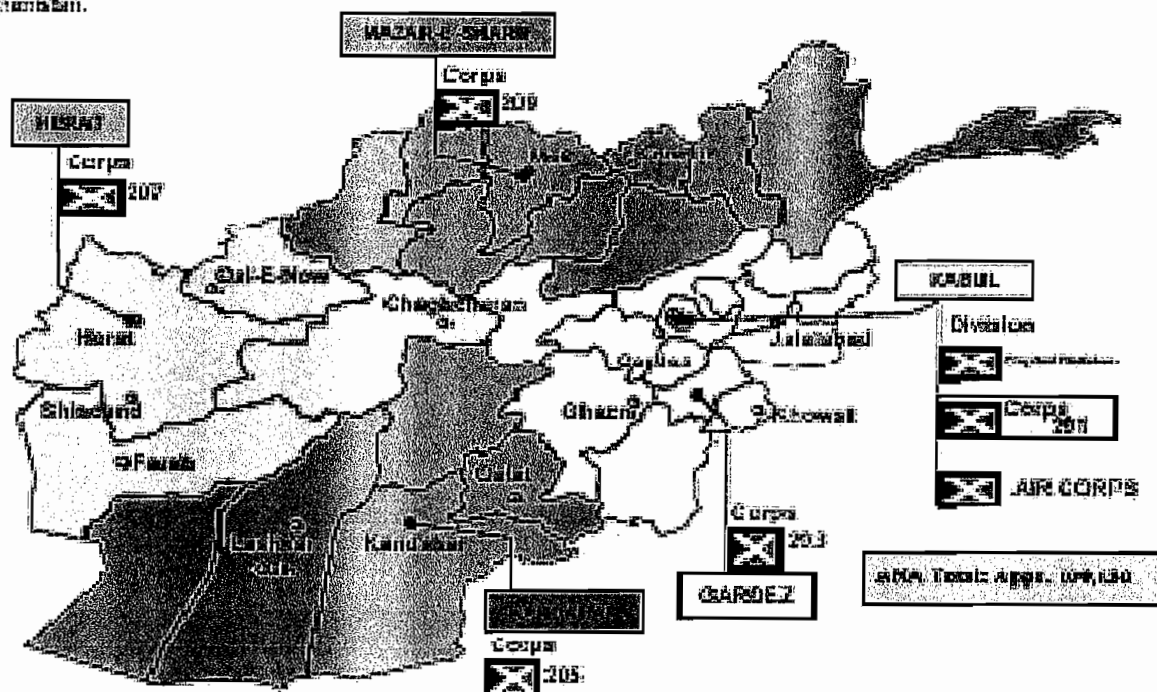
**Troop Contributing Nations (TCNs)** The ISAF mission consists of the following 43 nations (the troop numbers are based on latest contribution and do not reflect the exact number on the ground at any one time).

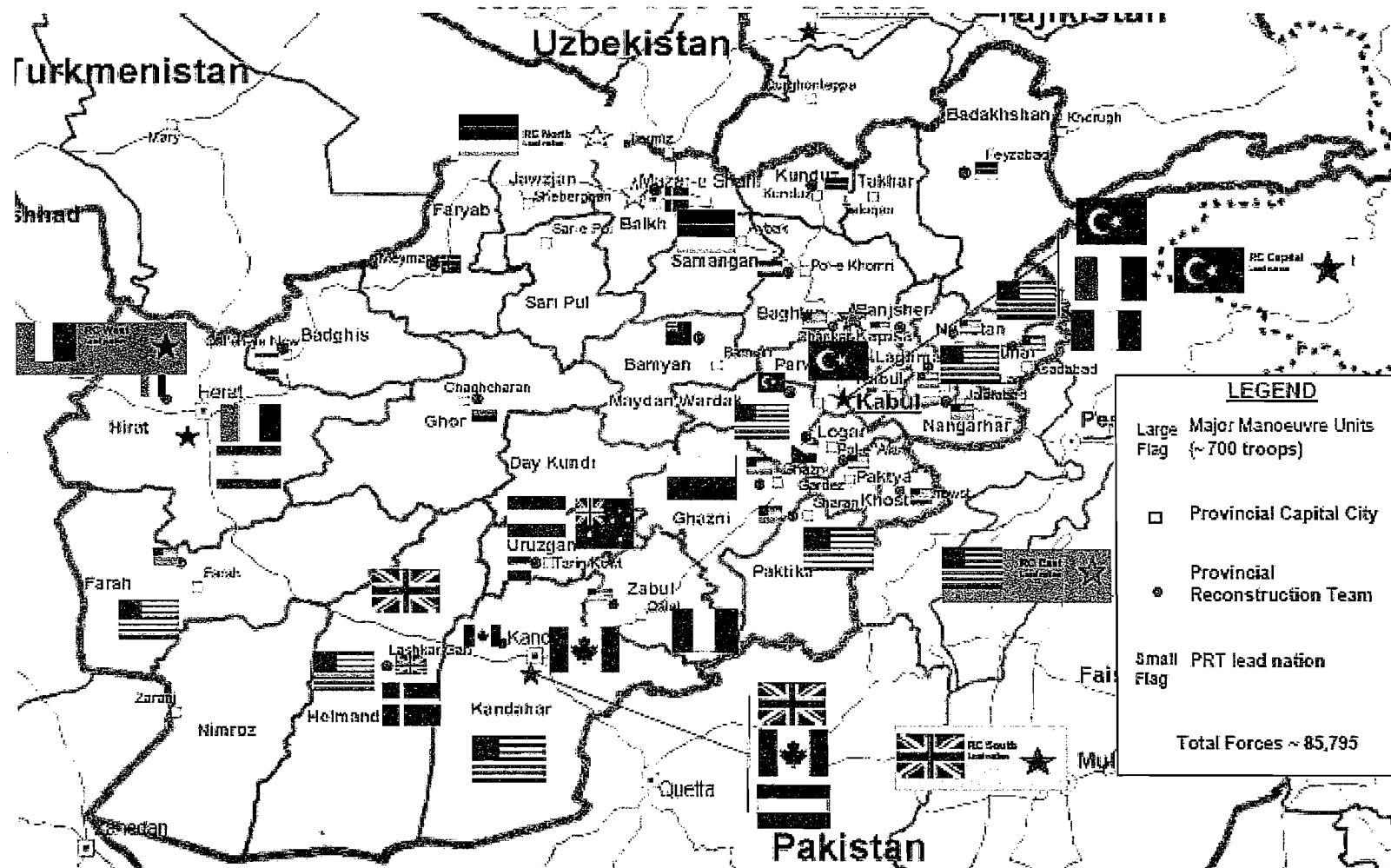
	Albania	155		Georgia	115		Portugal	997
	Austria	9		Germany	8195		Romania	916
	Australia	1550		Greece	25		Singapore	50
	Bosnia & Herzegovina	2		Hungary	115		Slovakia	240
	Canada	2810		Iceland	1		Slovenia	10
	Croatia	195		Ireland	5		Spain	1070
	Czech Republic	410		Italy	1450		Sweden	410
	Denmark	150		Jordan	0		The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	985
	Estonia	130		Latvia	115		Turkey	1155
	Finland	25		Lithuania	165		Ukraine	0
	France	1750		Luxembourg	5		United Arab Emirates	25
				Netherlands	1940		United Kingdom	5500
				New Zealand	130		United States	17200
				Norway	500			
				Poland	1955			
							<b>Total</b>	<b>85785</b>

### II. The Afghan National Army (ANA): Facts and Figures

As of 22 December 2009, the ANA has an actual strength of approximately 100,130 personnel. In January 2010, the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, co-chaired by the Afghan government and the United Nations, agreed to increase the total strength of the ANA to 171,000 by October 2010.

Operationally, the ANA is currently divided into 3 Corps headquarters, a Capital Division responsible for the security of the Kabul area, and an ANA Air Corps providing the essential air support to the ANA brigades deployed throughout Afghanistan.

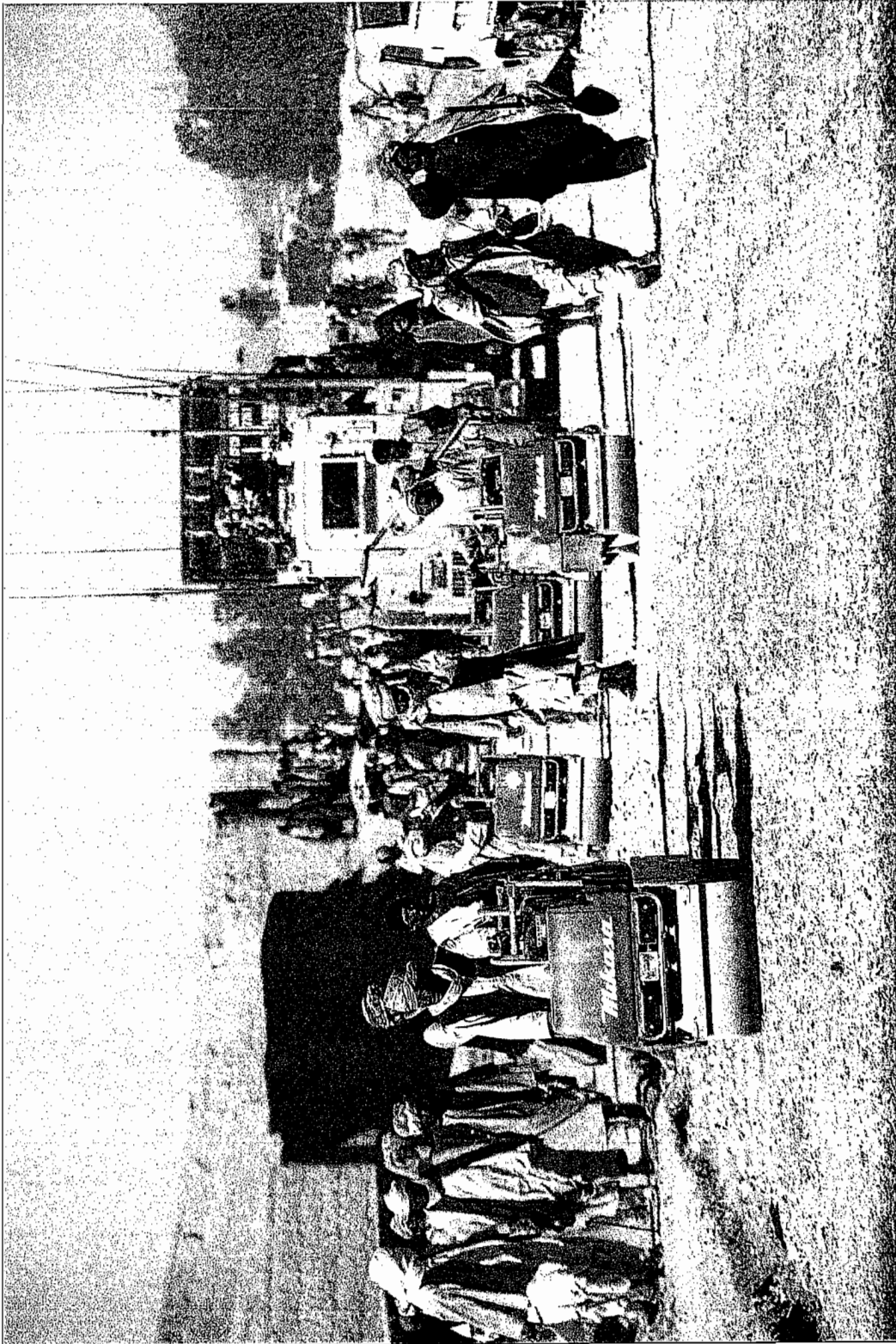




Source: NATO HQ Media Operations Centre – Afghanistan

Updated: 1 February 2010

Appendix E - Afghans working on Road project



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